

What is claimed is:

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1. A set of load planning tables for use in a system for managing shipping parcels, the set of load planning tables comprising:
 - a) a group table, for storing group identifiers, each group identifier used to identify a group of one or more parcels;
 - b) a load table, for storing records of attributes associated with a load, which is in turn associated with a group, each record having a group identifier field and a load identifier field;
 - c) a stop table, for storing records of attributes associated with a stop, which is in turn associated with a load, which is in turn associated with a group, each record having a group identifier field, a load identifier field, a stop identifier field, and a drop bill number field;
 - d) a shipment header table, for storing records of attributes associated with a shipment, which is in turn optionally associated with a stop, which is in turn associated with a load, which is in turn associated with a group, each record having a group identifier field, a load identifier field, a bill number field that serves as a shipment identifier and optionally relates the record to a record in the stop table via the drop bill number field in records of the stop table, an origin identifier field, and a destination identifier field; and
 - e) a cost table, for storing records of attributes associated with a component cost of a load, which is in turn associated with a load, which is in turn associated with a group, each record having a group identifier field, a load identifier field, a field indicating a cost type, and a field indicating a cost amount.
2. A set of load planning tables as in claim 1, wherein the records of the load table also include fields for indicating a master load identifier, a carrier identifier, a tariff identifier, an origin and a destination.

3. A set of load planning tables as in claim 2, wherein each record of the load table also include a field for indicating a pro number, a field for an inbound/outbound indicator, a field indicating an origin, and a field indicating a destination.

4. A set of load planning tables in claim 1, wherein the records of the stop table also include fields for indicating a drop load identifier, a drop distribution center identifier, and a parent load.

5. A system for managing shipping parcels, the system comprising:

- b) a planning system, responsive to requests to plan shipping for a parcel, and responsive to stored planning information and to interactive planning information, for providing a rated route;
- c) a shipping database, responsive to updates to planning information, for providing stored planning information, further responsive to a customer order including shipping requirements for the customer order, and further responsive to the rated route, for providing a stored rated route for shipping the parcel, the shipping database including a set of load planning tables, the set of load tables comprising:
 - i) a group table, for storing group identifiers, each group identifier used to identify a group of one or more parcels;
 - ii) a load table, for storing records of attributes associated with a load, which is in turn associated with a group, each record having a group identifier field and a load identifier field;
 - iii) a stop table, for storing records of attributes associated with a stop, which is in turn associated with a load, which is in turn associated with a group, each record having a group identifier field, a load identifier field, a stop identifier field, and a drop bill number field;
 - iv) a shipment header table, for storing records of attributes associated with a shipment, which is in turn optionally associated with a stop, which is in turn associated with a load, which is in turn associated with a group, each record

having a group identifier field, a load identifier field, a bill number field that serves as a shipment identifier and optionally relates the record to a record in the stop table via the drop bill number field in records of the stop table, an origin identifier field, and a destination identifier field; and

v) a cost table, for storing records of attributes associated with a component cost of a load, which is in turn associated with a load, which is in turn associated with a group, each record having a group identifier field, a load identifier field, a field indicating a cost type, and a field indicating a cost amount.

6. A system as in claim 5, wherein the records of the load table also include fields for indicating a master load identifier, a carrier identifier, a tariff identifier, an origin and a destination.

7. A system as in claim 6, wherein each record of the load table also include a field for indicating a pro number, a field for an inbound/outbound indicator, a field indicating an origin, and a field indicating a destination.

8. A system as in claim 5, wherein the records of the stop table also include fields for indicating a drop load identifier, a drop distribution center identifier, and a parent load.

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